

less than the poverty level for a family of two. The real value of the minimum wage today is 30 percent below its peak in 1968 and 19 percent below where it stood in 1981 at the start of the Reagan Administration. Even if the minimum wage is increased to \$6.65 by 2004, the real value of the minimum wage will still be below its 1981 level. However, by enacting this legislation we will restore purchasing power to minimum wage workers, better enabling them to support themselves and their families and to more fully participate in our economy.

Raising the minimum wage to \$6.65 will lift the wages of seven million low-wage workers. While women make up less than half of the workforce, sixty-one percent of the workers who will benefit from a minimum wage increase are women. One-third of the affected workers who benefit from a minimum wage increase are African American or Hispanic, though those groups together make up less than a quarter of the workforce. A minimum wage increase is especially beneficial to workers in low-wage industries and occupations, including those employed in sales, service, and food preparation, and especially those in retail trade.

A \$1.50 increase in the minimum wage will add \$3,000 to the annual income of full-time minimum wage workers. For a low-income family of three, \$3000 means 15 months of groceries, 7 months of utilities, or tuition for a community college degree. Enacting this legislation will restore purchasing power to minimum wage workers and better enable them to support themselves, their families and the economy. Work should pay. No one who works for a living should have to live in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, a fair increase in the minimum wage is long overdue. The failure of Congress to increase the minimum wage is driving more and more working families into poverty. We owe it to them and to the Nation to act quickly on this legislation.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FOR H.R. 966, DISABLED VETERANS' RETURN-TO-WORK ACT OF 2003

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today on behalf of Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. EVANS, I am introducing H.R. 966, the Disabled Veterans' Return-to-Work Act of 2003. This bill reinstates a VA pilot program which expired on December 31, 1995.

H.R. 966 would ensure the availability of vocational training to newly eligible VA non-service-connected pension recipients. The program, open to those veterans age 45 years or younger, would provide disabled pension recipients the opportunity to receive training in order to return to the job market. There are many ways our veterans can and do contribute to the economy. Those veterans receiving non-service-connected pension are in effect discouraged from seeking employment because of the needs-based structure of VA's Pension Program, whereby every dollar they earn is offset from the amount of monthly pension they receive.

Mr. Speaker, I expect the Veterans' Affairs Committee to consider this bill during the 1st

Session of the 108th Congress. It is time to reinstate the pilot providing vocational training to certain pension recipients rather than requiring these veterans to rely solely on the VA pension program and health care system for the remainder of their lives. I believe the pilot program indeed will furnish data showing that many of these veterans desire independence from, not dependence on, the current non-service-connected pension program.

CANADIAN PLEA IN AIR INDIA CASE COVERS UP GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, the Canadian courts accepted a plea bargain from Inderjit Singh Reyat in a case related to the bombing of an Air India jet in 1985 that killed 329 people. The plea covers up the clear and strong evidence that the Indian government itself blew up the airplane.

The book *Soft Target*, written by Canadian journalists Zuhair Kashmeri of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and Brian McAndrew of the *Toronto Star*, shows that the story agreed to by Mr. Reyat matches a story first suggested in 1985 by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). A Sikh named Lal Singh reported that he was offered "two million dollars and settlement in a nice country" for false testimony in the case. He turned down that offer. There are some questions about whether the evidence in Reyat's first trial was valid, according to the *National Post*.

Canadian Member of Parliament David Kilgour wrote a book called *Betrayal: The Spy Canada Abandoned about a Polish-Canadian double agent who was approached by the Indian government to carry out a second bombing*. *Soft Target* shows that the Indian Consul General in Toronto knew more than the RCMP and the Canadian Security Investigative Service (CSIS) in the early hours of the investigation. Why did his daughter and wife, a friend of his who was an auto dealer, and the director of North American operations for the Indian government all cancel their reservations on the doomed flight at the last minute, Mr. Speaker?

Even if the Indian government's story that a Sikh carried the bomb onto the plane is true, it implicates them. The person they have identified is associated with a Sikh activist named Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, who was identified in the book *Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism as someone who has been supported by the Indian government and has worked at its behest, including cooperating with them on the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984*. Thus, even the Indian government's own version of the story places the blame squarely on the Indian government.

Back on July 26, 1992, the *India Monitor* reported the arrest in Bombay of a Sikh named Manjit Singh in connection with the Air India case. The RCMP, however, said it knew of no Manjit Singh and he was not a suspect. The Indian government has been desperately trying to pin its crime on the Sikhs for years.

The Council of Khalistan has issued an excellent press release on the Reyat case. I

would like to place it in the RECORD at this time, Mr. Speaker.

CANADIAN COURTS COVER UP INDIAN COMPLICITY IN BOMBING

REYAT PLEA MATCHES RCMP STORY SUGGESTED IN 1985 QUESTIONING

WASHINGTON, DC., Feb. 12, 2003.—The recent plea bargain by Inderjit Singh Reyat in the 1985 Air India crash is the result of a concerted Indo-Canadian effort to cover up the Indian government's own responsibility for this atrocity that killed 329 innocent people, said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh Nation's struggle for independence.

The book *Soft Target*, written by respected Canadian journalists Zuhair Kashmeri of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and Brian McAndrew of the *Toronto Star*, clearly established that the Indian government is responsible for the bombing. The book quotes an investigator from the Canadian Security Investigative Service (CSIS) who said, "If you really want to clear up the incidents quickly, take vans down to the Indian High Commission and the consulates in Toronto and Vancouver, load up everybody and take them down for questioning. We know it and they know it that they are involved."

Mere hours after the incident, while the CSIS and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were still retrieving the passenger list stored in the Air India computer, Indian Consul General Surinder Malik called the *Globe and Mail* to tell them to look for an "L. Singh" on the passenger manifest. How could Malik have known this? "L. Singh" turned out to be a Sikh named Lal Singh. Lal Singh told an Indian newspaper that he was offered "\$2 million and settlement in a nice country" to testify falsely against the three individuals that Canada has charged with the bombing, an offer he refused. Curiously, Consul General Malik knew more details about the case than the police did.

Malik had pulled his wife and daughter off the flight suddenly, claiming that his daughter had a paper to write for school. A Canadian auto dealer who was a friend of Malik's cancelled his reservation on the flight at the last minute, as well. So did Siddhartha Singh, head of North American Affairs for external relations in New Delhi. In addition the sister-in-law of the head of the Canadian wing of Dal Khalsa cancelled her reservations. Dal Khalsa is a political party formed by Zail Singh, who was President of India when Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister. How did all these people affiliated with the Indian government come to cancel their reservations at the last minute?

The story told in court in connection with Inderjit Singh Reyat's plea bargain matches in significant detail the story pressed upon him at the time of his initial arrest in November 1985, which he denied. An RCMP agent named Glen Rockwell told Reyat that he could get off the hook if he said that others hatched the bombing plot and sought his assistance and that he didn't know what he was doing. Reyat replied "I didn't help killing those people. No way." He said that Talwinder Singh Parmar, who has since been murdered by the Indian police, wanted to send some kind of explosive device to India. These details match the "statement of facts" at Reyat's trial.

The Indian Consul General planted a story in the *Globe and Mail* claiming that Reyat was given a parcel to carry onto the flight by Jagdev Nijjar, whose brother was in the inner circle of Jagjit Singh Chohan, who claims to be a Khalistani leader, but who was exposed in the book *Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism* by Professor Gurtej Singh IAS in letters showing that he conspired with the Indian government in planning the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar.